(d) if so, the decisions taken thereat; and

(e) the steps being taken to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) The Government Departments always endeavour to co-operate so as to streamline conservation and harvest of medical plants.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Several decisions were taken to develop the sector which are being implemented.

Ill-effects of exposure to asbestos

2741. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that exposure to asbestos dust scar lung tissue, trigger cancer and cause pleural diseases;

(b) if so,whether any empirical study has been made in the matter amongst the labour employed in asbestos companies;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the curative and corrective measures proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (d) The World Health Organisation (WHO) is of the view that persons engaged in asbestos mining are at risk of having cancer. Studies done by the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), Ahmedabad have shown than long term exposure to any type of asbestos can lead to development of asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

Various standards have been prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to ensure safety in handling and use of Asbestos and Asbestos products. In addition there are provisions under the Factories (Amendment) Act, 1987, Mines Act, 1952 and Environment Protection Act, 1986 to reduce/control the hazards produced due to Asbestos exposure.